

## PART VII

## Farm Marketing and Level of Living

Location for Marketing

Once isolated by poor roads and dependent almost solely on Puget Sound water transportation, Mason County agriculture in recent years has gained improved facilities for marketing in the general western Washington area. The main progress has been in development of modern highways which connect with Olympia and the Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area. Better motor vehicle access to Hood Canal and the Olympic Mountains has also increased the tourist trade and this in turn has enlarged local markets for dairy products and other produce. Farmers are now within one hour of the Olympia area and within two to three hours of Tacoma and Seattle. They can use trucking services which drive around the southern end of Puget Sound or cross by ferry and the Tacoma Narrows bridge to reach terminal markets and food processing plants in the Seattle-Tacoma area.

For farmers with woodlands to market forest products the location is good. Trucking distance is short to major pulp and lumber mills at Shelton, Tacoma, Port Townsend, Olympia and the Grays Harbor district. Branch railroad lines facilitate shipping of logs, pulpwood and Christmas trees from the Shelton and Allyn areas.

Transportation

In recent years nearly all farm products sold by Mason County producers and growers have moved by truck. In earlier decades there was considerable shipping by boats, launches and barges from numerous landings on Hood Canal and the inlets of southern Puget Sound. Harstene Island is the only farming area today that is dependent on ferries or boats. The main arterials of truck shipping of livestock, whole milk, forest products and cash crops are the following: U. S. Highway 101 which traverses the county from north to south and connects Shelton and the Hood Canal settlements with Olympia and Port Angeles; State Highways 14 and 21 which connect with Bremerton and ferry terminals on the Kitsap Peninsula and the cross-Sound bridge at Tacoma; State Highway 9D which provides a good farm-to-market road between Kamilche and Grays Harbor.

Limited use is made of the Northern Pacific Railway Company's branch line. This railroad connects Shelton with coastwise railroad mainlines at Centralia. It is used primarily for exporting wood products and Christmas trees. In contrast to earlier decades there is very little rail shipping of livestock, hay or other cash crops.

Income, Value of Farm Products Sold

Agricultural marketing in Mason County during 1954 involved eight major types of products and returned a gross income of over \$761,000 to the farming population. Total sales were greater than in 1949 when the Census found that gross farm income derived from marketing of farm products was \$640,000.

Total Value of Farm Products Sold in 1954: \$761,174

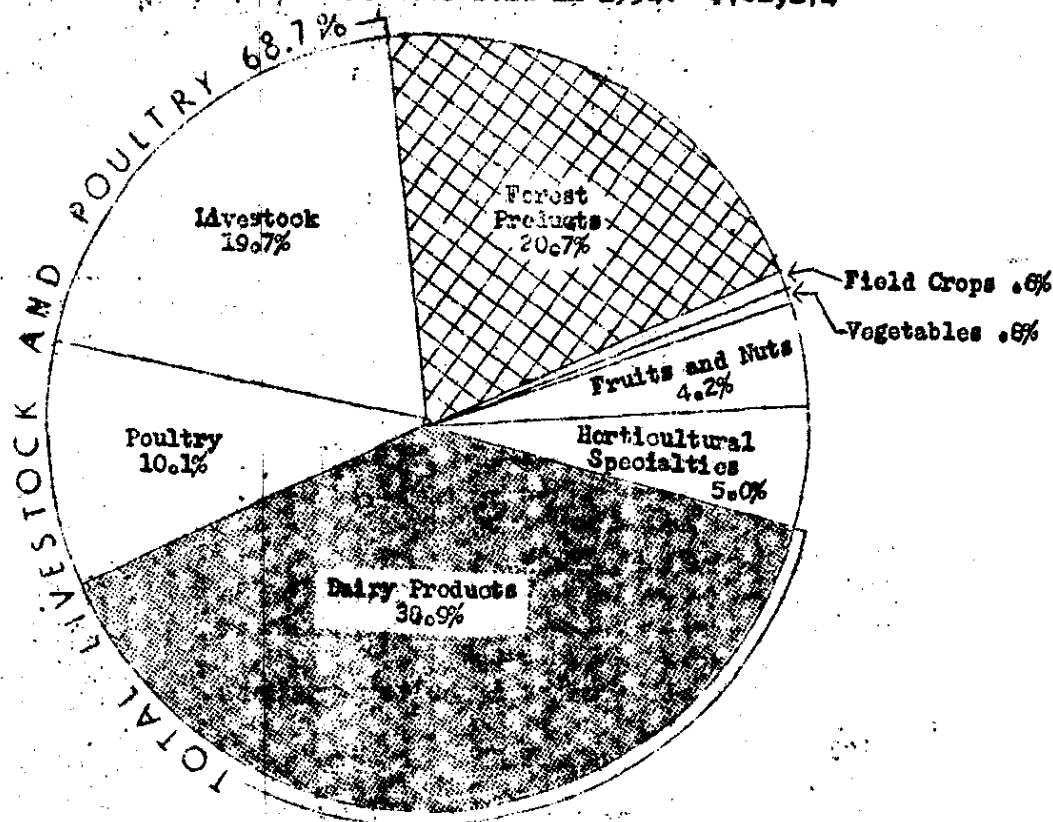


Figure 14.- Sources of Cash Income, Mason County Farms, 1954

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Farm gross income from sales of products was divided up among only 108 commercial farms in 1954. Only about one-fifth of all rural places defined as farms by the Census were classed as commercial operations selling \$250 or more worth of products during the year. Noncommercial farms (largely part-time farming and residential) numbered about 400. A large majority of Mason County farmers are not on a full-time commercial basis.

Most numerous of the commercial farms were those which sold products worth \$1,200 to \$5,000 per year. There were only 13 high income farms which sold more than \$10,000 worth of products. Medium and low income farms are characteristic of Mason County. Most of the farms which had a gross income exceeding \$5,000 per year were dairy and general livestock farms.

#### Marketing Dairy Products

Shipping whole milk to urban centers is the major agricultural marketing activity in Mason County. In 1954 dairymen received about two-fifths of all the county farm income. They shipped milk and cream valued at about \$296,000. In 1954 about 70 farms made sales of milk and cream.

Mason County is a surplus milk area. Marketing facilities are organized to distribute grade A milk and factory milk in the southern Puget Sound area.

Milk is marketed under a Federal Milk Order governing the Puget Sound Milk Marketing Area which includes 15 dairy counties in western Washington. In 1958 there were 17 dairy farms in Mason County participating under the Market Order rules. <sup>1/</sup> Most of their milk was being distributed as grade A milk in the Olympia, Shelton and Hood Canal area. Some milk was sold as factory milk to dairy plants in Olympia and Chehalis.

Table 24.- Livestock and Livestock Products Marketed  
Mason County, 1954

Class of Livestock Products Sold	Quantity Marketed	Amount Received by Farmers
<u>Dairy Products</u>		
Whole milk-----	5,879,167 lbs.	\$289,526
Butterfat-----	12,224 lbs.	6,461
Total all dairy products		\$295,987
<u>Poultry and poultry products</u>		
Chickens-----	23,471 birds	\$ 22,599
Eggs-----	100,830 dozen	52,067
Turkeys, ducks, geese----		2,150
Total all poultry & poultry products		\$76,816
<u>Animals sold alive</u>		
Cattle-----	908 head	\$ 93,761
Calves-----	1,200 head	51,790
Hogs and pigs-----	156 head	3,377
Sheep and lambs-----	29 head	242
Horses and mules-----	5 head	330
Total all animals sold alive		\$149,500
<u>Other livestock and livestock products sold-----</u>		\$ 365
Total amount received for livestock and livestock products-----		\$522,668

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Compared with earlier years, farm sales of cream and farm-churned butter are much smaller. Nearly all milk today is shipped as whole milk. Farm separation of milk cream for creameries has declined. In 1954 only about 12,000 pounds of cream were sold from dairy farms compared with 44,000 in 1949. Sales of farm-churned butter have also become very limited.

#### Marketing Live Animals

Livestock sold for slaughter, feeders and breeding stock makes up the second most important type of agricultural marketing. In 1954 over 200 farms

<sup>1/</sup> "Marketing Service Information Reports," Nicholas L. Keyock, Market Administrator, Puget Sound, Washington Milk Marketing Area. Seattle, Washington.

sold cattle, calves, sheep and hogs for a total return of \$149,500. Cattle and calves of beef and dairy breeds are the most important, having a sales value of about \$145,000 per year. Hogs are second in marketing importance. In 1954 about 20 farms sold a total of over 150 head with a market value of \$3,377.

Important market outlets for livestock are at community auction salesyards and meat packing yards at Olympia, Chehalis, Centralia, Rochester, Auburn and Tacoma. In recent years most livestock and dairymen have been selling less to county buyers. More and more livestock is trucked to nearby community auction yards where buyers bid on a competitive basis.

### Marketing Eggs and Poultry

Sales of poultry and eggs rank fourth in importance in Mason County agricultural marketing. In 1954 there were about 140 farms with commercial sales of poultry and eggs with total sales of nearly \$77,000. Eggs sold by 110 farms were the most valuable item, bringing in \$52,000. Live chickens and broilers were sold by 72 farms with a total value of \$22,600 in 1954. Three farms were specializing in broiler or fryer chickens and produced 16,000 broilers in 1954 worth about \$14,000.

Market outlets for poultry and eggs are in local cities and towns and in processing plants at Olympia and Tacoma. Several poultrymen were participating in the Washington Farmers' Cooperative selling poultry and eggs and buying feeds and supplies through its plant in Olympia. Some poultry farmers sell eggs at roadside stands and make deliveries to Shelton and country and resort stores.

### Marketing Crops

Crops are third in importance behind dairy products and livestock in the Mason County farm economy. In the Census of 1954 farms with commercial crops had sales totaling about \$81,000. Commercial crops were diversified among a variety of horticultural specialties, berries, grapes, vegetables and forage crops.

The most valuable type of crop marketed was the horticultural specialties consisting of a variety of plants, flowers, shrubs and seeds grown in greenhouses and small fields. This industry included only a few farms in the area between Olympia and Shelton and on the shores of Case Inlet.

Grapes and berries were the second most valuable cash crops recorded in the Census of 1954. Sales of these specialty fruits were made by 80 small farms mainly on Case Inlet, Stretch Island and Harstene Island and were valued at over \$32,000 from over 50 small farms in the Allyn and Grapeview districts. About 70 tons were sold in 1955 valued at over \$25,000. Strawberries, raspberries, loganberries and blueberries were sold from over 20 different small farms. Processing plants were the major outlets for grapes and berries. A local grape winery near Grapeview is the major market for juice grapes. Some berries are trucked to Olympia, Tacoma and Winslow for freezing. Several small berry growing farms sell to local stores and do roadside vending.

Field crops of hay and grain and vegetables are mainly traded locally and only small amounts are trucked out of the county area. Hay and grain in surplus

is generally sold within the neighborhood for use by dairy farms. In 1954 about 10 farms made sales of clover-timothy and oat hay. Sales were only about 150 tons and total value of all hay and grain sales was only \$4,780 during the 1954 Census year. Mason County dairymen usually grow their own supplies of feed but in some dry years there is a shortage of hay requiring purchases of alfalfa and other hay from hay surplus areas in eastern Washington.

Table 25.- Crops Marketed From Mason County Farms, 1954.

Type of Crop Sold	Amount Received By Farmers (Dollars)	Percent All Crops Sold
Horticultural Specialties (cut flowers, plants, florist greens, bulbs, shrubs, trees, vines, seeds, etc.)	\$38,135	47.0
Fruits, Nuts and Berries (grapes, strawberries, raspberries, loganberries)	32,454	40.0
Vegetables (snap beans, sweet corn, green peas, etc.)	5,718	7.1
Field Crops (oats, hay, silage)	<u>4,778</u>	<u>5.9</u>
Total amount received by farmers for cash crops	\$81,035	100.0

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Specified Farm Expenditures, Farm Operation Costs

Mason County farmers who reported expenditures in 1954 spent over \$303,000 during the year for feed, labor and supplies used in crop and livestock production. Chief farming expense was for livestock and poultry feed. Nearly 430 farms bought feed and this totaled \$197,995 during 1954. Feed costs averaged about \$462 per farm. Gasoline, petroleum fuel and oil was a second major cost item in Mason County agriculture with an average per farm of slightly over \$180. Labor was hired by 87 farms which paid \$410 per farm. The farm work payroll ran over \$35,000 during 1954. Compared with 1949, feed costs on farms have been reduced slightly but 1954 Census figures show that costs for labor, machine hire, petroleum and fertilizers have increased.

Table 26.- Specified Farm Expenditures in 1954, Mason County

Type of Expenditure	Farms Reporting	Expenditure of all Farms	Average Per Farm
Machine hire.....	135	\$ 12,230	\$ 90.59
Hired labor.....	87	35,705	410.40
Feed for livestock and poultry	428	197,995	462.60
Gasoline, petroleum fuel & oil	268	48,360	180.44
Commercial fertilizer.....	101	9,215	91.23
Lime and liming materials.....	10	120	12.00
Total production costs		<u>\$303,625</u>	

Source : U.S. Census, Agriculture

Servicing and supplying of Mason County's 526 farms is a major basis of business in Shelton, Allyn, Union, Hoodsport and Belfair. This farm trade area is a market for over \$303,000 worth of supplies and equipment each year.

### Agricultural Income Compared to Other Income Sources

A study published in 1954 has shown that net income derived from net profits in agriculture is relatively low in Mason County. After deducting costs of production and expenditures made for supplies, services and labor it was found that net income from agriculture was less than \$200,000 per year for all commercial and noncommercial farms operating in the area. This study at Washington State College by Guthrie and Boyle of types and sources of income found that in Mason County agriculture was receiving less than one percent of all the income earned by residents of this county. It was far below manufacturing, trade, government and property income as a source of net income.

Table 27.- Types and Sources of Income 1950-1952, Mason County 1/

Type and Source of Income	Income in Dollars by Years			Percentage of County Income by Years		
	1950	1951	1952	1950	1951	1952
Agriculture	*	*	*	*	*	*
Construction	\$ 505,000	\$ 318,000	\$ 276,000	2.9	1.7	1.4
Government	1,325,000	1,565,000	1,791,000	2.7	8.6	8.9
Manufacturing	7,377,000	8,359,000	9,308,000	42.8	45.9	46.2
Service	1,083,000	1,245,000	1,609,000	6.3	6.8	8.0
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	982,000	992,000	1,038,000	5.7	5.4	5.1
Trade	2,275,000	2,508,000	2,678,000	13.2	13.8	13.3
Miscellaneous	286,000	212,000	242,000	1.7	1.3	1.1
Property Income	1,382,000	1,464,000	1,626,000	8.0	8.0	8.1
Other Income	2,010,000	1,545,000	1,594,000	11.7	8.5	7.9
Total	\$17,225,000	\$18,207,000	\$20,162,000	100.0	100.0	100.0

1/ John A. Guthrie and Stanley E. Boyle, County Income Payments in Washington, 1950-1952. Pullman, Wash. Washington State College, Bulletin No. 26.

### Marketing Forest Products

In recent years forest products from private farmer-owned woodlands have become the most valuable part of Mason County's farming economy. In this county, as throughout western Washington, the farm-forest crop with a varied list of logs and minor products has gained in value. In the Census year of 1954 an enumeration which covered farm sales of logs, pulpwood, fence posts and firewood found that this category of products had a sales value for the year of \$157,421.

Most valuable of the forest products in 1954 was over 2,900,000 board feet of sawlogs and veneer logs sold by 51 farms valued at about \$90,000. These logs were sold to mills in the Hood Canal, Bremerton, Shelton, Olympia and Grays Harbor areas.

Pulpwood was second in importance. In 1954 Mason County farmers sold 2,532 cords of fir, alder and maple pulpwood. At an average price of \$12 per cord this product returned a total of about \$30,000 to 24 or more farm operators. Pulpwood is trucked to major pulp plants at Shelton, Tacoma and Port Angeles.

Other wood products sold were firewood and fence posts. About 230 farms sold a total of 2,310 cords of fuelwood worth about \$4,000 to local, city and town consumers. There were 61 farms which cut and sold locally 6,600 fence posts valued at \$1,500.

An important category of products which the Census has not completely enumerated in this forested county include Christmas trees, wild huckleberry and salal foliage, cascara bark and Douglas fir seed cones. The Census of Agriculture finds it difficult to enumerate these items as farm forest products because a sizeable proportion of them are harvested by farmers and nonfarmers from private and public holdings not classified as farms. Some farmers who are part-time loggers buy stumpage or harvesting rights from neighboring forested land.

Douglas fir Christmas trees are a highly valuable crop from farm forests and industrial tree farms. Local County Forester estimates in recent years show an annual cut of over 250,000 trees roughly estimated to have a value of \$100,000 before shipped to regional and national markets. Christmas trees are trucked to receiving stations for grading and loading for coastwise rail and truck shipment to California. Some are shipped from Puget Sound ports to Hawaii. Some trees are grown as a crop in the Allyn, Belfair and Hood Canal districts.

Cascara bark is a wild forest tree product collected on farms and other woodlands in Mason County. This item is usually sold in dry form to country grain and feed and general stores for further shipping to a processing plant at Chehalis. There are no estimates of its market value.

Table 28.- Forest Products on Farms, Mason County, 1954

Type of Product	Farms Reporting	Quantity
Firewood and fuelwood cut-----	230	2,310 cords
Fence posts cut-----	61	6,602 posts
Sawlogs and veneer logs cut-----	51	2,944 M bd. ft.
Pulpwood cut-----	24	2,532 cords
Total value of farm-forest products sold and used on the farm-----	97	\$157,421

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Sword ferns and salal are decorative forest floor plants collected by numerous rural people in Mason County. Florist trade dealers located in Shelton and Tacoma receive these decorative wild plants for national marketing. There are no estimates of their value to Mason County's economy. A large part of the estimated state value of about \$1,000,000 annually, however, originates in the woodlands of Mason County.

Douglas fir seed cones are a minor item harvested for the forest tree nurseries in southwestern Washington. Shelton, Elma, Montesano and Roy are buying points. Mason County farm woodlands are an important source of the state's annual harvest of forest seeds of about 50,000 bushels per year. <sup>1/</sup>

#### Level of Living on Mason County Farms

On the whole, farm people have not enjoyed a level of living as high as city people. Farm incomes measured in dollars received for labor or goods sold average lower than urban incomes. City people also have readily available more conveniences. Because of isolation and widely scattered locations of homes it is more difficult for farmers to get electrical, telephone, sewer, running water and even highway service. These are often too costly for private utility companies and government to provide for all rural residents, particularly in mountainous areas. In numerous cases, incomes in some regions are too low for farmers to put in their own electrical, water and other service conveniences which people living in compact city neighborhoods take for granted.

The ownership and use of conveniences generally associated with a modern standard of living is below national and state averages in Mason County. A recent study of rural farm living levels over the State of Washington and the United States based on Agricultural Census figures found that Mason County had an index of 131 compared with 122 for the United States and 154 for the State of Washington.

While many of the farm homes in the better soil belts in the Skokomish Valley, Kamilche, Grapeview and Belfair districts are well-equipped and serviced, the county average is reduced by numerous cases of isolated farm places in the hilly island and peninsular areas. Rural electrical service is good reaching 93 percent of all farm homes. The use of electrical home appliances, however, is below state averages. Farm home use of telephones, central heating, modern plumbing and automobiles is below state averages but above national averages. Scattered forest and shoreline settlement where roads are poor and distance from markets is large are other factors which reduce the level of living standards in Mason County agriculture. About 47 percent of Mason County farms are 10 miles or more from a trading center, while over the state in general only 20 percent are this remote from a center.

Mason County agriculture, while impeded by isolation from markets, forests which are difficult to clear, and a generally poor glacial soil in its lowlands, has made steady progress. Farming has always been secondard to forest-resource based industries. Farming was developed as an important supplement to logging and lumbering by families who participate in both agriculture and logging and lumbering. The small number of full-time commercial dairy, livestock, grape and berry farmers together with the more numerous part-time farmers are an

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<sup>1/</sup> For further detailed information on marketing of woodlot products see: George Stenzel, Marketing Woodlot Products in the State of Washington. Institute of Forest Products, Washington Department of Conservation and Development, 303 Anderson Hall, University of Washington, Seattle. Bulletin No. 15, 1954.



Table 29.- Indices of Level of Living of Mason County Farm Families, 1950 Compared with State and National Averages

Index Items	Percentage of total farm families with listed index items		
	United States	Washington	Mason County
Farm Family Level of Living	122	154	131
Median Income per Family	\$1,567	\$2,380	\$2,550
Electricity	78.3%	92.5%	93.0%
Electric Hot Water Heater	17.4	49.1	36.0
Electric Washing Machine	58.7	85.4	79.8
Home Freezers	12.1	14.5	18.4
Mech. Refrigerators	62.7	77.4	69.8
Telephone	38.2	57.5	32.5
Hot and Cold Water Plumbing	23.8	70.4	63.7
Central Heating	18.1	17.8	8.5
Houses with More than One Person per Room	22.3	15.7	17.6
Automobiles	63.0	77.6	74.6
Travel 10 Miles or More to Trading Center	21.4	20.5	47.4

Source: Walter L. Slocum and Carol L. Stone, The Farm People of Washington at Mid-Century. State College of Washington, Washington Agric. Exp. Stations. Bulletin 557, February 1955. Pullman, Washington.

important part of the Mason County and southern Puget Sound economy of today. Numerous well-managed dairy, livestock and specialty crop farms stand as monuments to persevering pioneers who chose their homes on the Puget Sound shorelines, islands and forested uplands of Mason County.